

Bulletin

of the Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc.

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Acting Editor Sue Collier

The Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club Inc. encourages the study of natural history and supports conservation. We issue our journal *The Tasmanian Naturalist* annually in October. People with a range of backgrounds and knowledge are welcome as members.

Contact Genevieve Gates (6227 8638) for further information, or write to GPO Box 68A Hobart 7001.

Program

General meetings start at 7:45pm on the first Thursday of the month in the Life Science Building at the University of Tasmania. *Outings are usually held the following weekend, meeting at 10am outside the main entrance to the Museum, Macquarie Street. If you're planning to attend an outing but not the meeting prior, check as to the timing of the excursion, as sometimes unforeseen changes occur.*

6 Feb Allan Gray will speak on Plant Taxonomy with a special emphasis on eucalypt species.

9 Feb (Sunday) Allan will lead us on an outing in the Hobart area to try out our identification skills on the eucalypts.

6 March AGM & Presidents address. Patti Virtue's talk will focus on Southern Ocean studies and is bound to include some krill stories.

7-9 March *Federation meeting hosted by Tasmanian Fauna Society and Tasmanian Herpetological Society to be held at "Carnacoo" Scout Camp at Paper Beach on the West Tamar. This should be an excellent weekend with an exciting program including Holwell Gorge, Black Sugarloaf, Supply River and Tamar Island.*

Accommodation is available for \$5 per person per night plus \$11 for Saturday evening meal. Camping also available. Booking essential if you want a bed and/or meal on Saturday. Contact Sue Collier on 6229 6597 for further information and bookings (by 3 March).

16 Mar (Sunday) *(Note change of date due to Federation meeting) Outing to Eaglehawk Neck to look at the seashore and rock pools.*

3 April Jeff Copson will talk about feral cats.

5 April (Saturday) *Bird watching and fungi trip on the lower slopes of Mt Wellington. Bring binoculars and hand lens.*

1 May Peter McQuillan (author of *Butterflies of Tasmania*) will give us a talk covering some of his recent research work in the area of the dispersal of native plants by native animals.

4 May (Sunday) *Peter will lead us on an outing in the Hobart area and show us some examples of plant dispersal.*

Reminder

1997 membership fees are now due. A form is enclosed for payment of your subs. Prompt payment will help our committee.

1997 Committee

A nomination form is also enclosed. Elections will take place at the AGM on 6 March.

Au Revoir Don

Don Hird has left Tasmania for the Trobriand Islands (off Papua New Guinea) for two years as a "volunteer abroad". We thank Don for his hard work as president, committee member and mammal survey group leader over many years. We wish Don, Jacinta, Halley and Louis all the best in their new adventure and congratulate Don for his newly acquired Masters Degree.

Excursion Reports

Hartz Mountain 8 December 1996

by Sue Collier

Eight Field Nats set off from Hartz car park on a sunny and clear day with a cold wind. On our drive down from Hobart, Phil and I saw a grey goshawk near Franklin, sitting quietly in a tree. We took the main walking track to Hartz Peak stopping often to admire the plants. We were surprised to see that the old bush hut across Arve Creek has now been demolished. Some 12 years ago, a wildfire started at this hut and burnt out some of the lower slopes.

Phil pointed out a myrtle tree (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) which appeared to have been burnt in an earlier bushfire. It has produced several shoots from a lignotuber which have now grown into healthy trunks. This type of regeneration is not often seen in rainforests but is more common in sub-alpine areas.

We continued on and eventually reached the summit for lunch. Several members of the party had never been to the summit before. We had excellent views of Mt Anne, Federation Peak and many other South-West mountains. The alpine wildflowers were quite good, with mostly early varieties being seen. These included *Euphrasia gibbsiae*, *Erigeron stellaris*, *Mitrasacme archeri*, *Aciphylla procumbens*, and *Senecio pectinatus* var *ochroleuca* (in bud).

Birds seen on the mountain included green rosellas on the lower slopes and many crescent honeyeaters higher up. These were very vocal-perhaps they recognised the start of summer.

Snails found by Kevin were *Planilaoma luckmanii*, *Caryodes dufresnii*, and *Stenacapha* sp. "Wellington".

Lune River Weekend 9–10 November 1996

by Kevin Bonham

About twenty resilient members braved the delightfully unstable weather conditions and headed south in search of orchids, on a weekend which actually yielded 26 species. Our first walk, around Ida Bay, produced only eight but these included one find of interest. We couldn't identify the strange little *Prasophyllum* in the field but Les Rubenach worked out it was *P. pulchellum*, a newly described species known from southern Bruny Island!

After the walk many opted for the comforts of the Thermal Pool, or went underground completely at Hastings Caves. Sloshing about on the surface, I was amazed to find a new species of snail (*Geminoropa*) right outside such a popular tourist site! Another (already known) undescribed *Geminoropa* also showed up.

[At dusk a small party were seen heading again in the direction of the Thermal Pool. No further reliable information is available. (ed)]

The next morning blessed us with magnificently low and heavy snowfalls on nearby Adamsons Peak, but ten of us did the South Cape Bay walk anyway. A vicious hailstorm notwithstanding, we were richly rewarded with 14 species of orchid. The best find was *Caladenia transitoria* (formerly known as *C. iridescens*), with others including *Prasophyllum lindleyanum* and a large *Caladenia patersonii* in exactly the same spot as last year.

New members

A special welcome to Mark Jacobs, Albert Thompson, Leonard Cusack, Jonathan Duddles and Jane Tyler.

Untouched King Island

by Kevin Bonham

Those who know the place will know I'm joking, but this is actually the title of a sometimes lurid guidebook which was the butt of many jokes between myself, Don and the Forster/Wilkins family on our unofficial club trip to King Island in December.

Seriously, King Island has much to offer the visiting naturalist and is grossly under-rated. Two objectives of our trip, the green-and-golden-bell-frog and the potoroo, managed to elude us despite numerous five-year-old reports. Snails were more forthcoming, with 13 species found, including seven new records for the island, three new records for the state (all Victorian species), and the rediscovery of *Austrochloritis victoriae*, common in Victoria but missing from Tasmania since about 1920.

A millipede I found turned out to be a new species, and a fair tally of orchids (15 species) included the strangest *Thelymitra* I have ever seen. Don had a lot of fun catching burrowing shore crabs around the fascinating coastal springs.

Serious surveying of the Bass Strait islands is far too rare, and I'd like to thank the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for their generous financial support of this survey.

Did you know?

Easter 1906 saw the second Easter Camp-Out of the T.F.N.C. at Freycinet Peninsula. Thirty-eight members enjoyed several days of bird watching, botanising and other natural history pursuits. Among the participants were J. W. Beattie (photographer), and L. Rodway (Government botanist).